A

SERMON

Preached before the

SONS of the CLERGY,

IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH of St. *PAUL*,

On *THURSDAY*, *May* 9, 1754.

By *JOHN BUTLER*, LL. D.
Chaplain to her Royal Highneſs the Princeſs Dowager of WALES.

To which is annexed,

A LIST of the Annual Amount of the Collection for this CHARITY, from the Year 1721.

LONDON:

Printed for J. and R. TONSON and S. DRAPER in the *Strand*, and J. WHISTON and B. WHITE in *Fleet-ſtreet*.

MDCCLIV.

[Price Six-Pence.]

A

SERMON

Preached before the

Sons of the CLERGY,

IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH of ST. PAUL,

On TUESDAY, May 9, 1754.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

By JOHN [illegible] D.

Chaplain to his Royal Highness [illegible] Prince of Wales.

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TO

The Right Reverend Father in God the Biſhop of BRISTOL,
The Rev. ROBERT SMITH, *LL. D.*
The Rev. CHARLES BEAUMONT, *M. A.*
The Rev. JUCKES EGERTON, *M. A.*
The Rev. SPARK CANHAM, *M. A.*
SLINGSBY BETHEL, *Eſq; and Alderman,*
PAGGEN HALE, *Eſq;*
MARMADUKE FOTHERGILL, *Eſq;*
HENRY SAVAGE, *Eſq;*
JOHN DEALTRY, *M. D.*
Mr. JAMES PRICE,

STEWARDS

For the late FEAST of the

SONS of the CLERGY,

THIS

SERMON,

Preached and Publiſhed at their REQUEST,

Is INSCRIBED,

By Their moſt faithful Servant,

JOHN BUTLER.

SERMON,

Preached and Published at their Request,

BY

JOHN BUTLER.

1 Cor. ix. 11.

If we have ſown unto you ſpiritual things, is it a great thing if we ſhall reap your carnal things?

THE apoſtle throughout this chapter, as in other parts of his epiſtles, profeſſes his diſintereſtedneſs in preaching the goſpel. He was zealous for the ſucceſs of it, and therefore choſe freely to give up the ſupport to which he was intitled, rather than ſuffer the cauſe of truth to be reproached with the leaſt mixture of mercenary views.

It was of uſe to mention this to the churches to whom he wrote, for it obviated the ſuſpicion of any worldly deſigns in our holy religion; and though his conduct, in this reſpect, was not an immediate evidence of the truth of chriſtianity, yet it exhibited an undeniable proof that he himſelf was convinced.

But as other teachers of chriſtianity might need a ſupport more than himſelf, and when the extraordinary gifts, which he had, were withdrawn from the church, the office of a teacher would require more application, and

ſo

ſo become leſs conſiſtent with ſecular cares, he furniſhes his ſucceſſors with ſufficient pleas for a maintenance, in the very act of diſclaiming it for himſelf.

The pleas he urges are founded in reaſon and equity, in the law of Moſes, and the ſpecial appointment of God. Not one of theſe is more irreſiſtible than that affecting appeal to every chriſtian's conſcience, which I have choſen for my text: "If we have ſown unto you ſpiritual "things, is it a great thing if we ſhall reap your carnal "things?"

Arguments drawn from authority preſuppoſe both the authority, and the application of it to the caſe, to be indiſputable; and it is generally obſerved, that men who are tenacious of their property, are very ingenious in forming exceptions to any demand upon the leaſt ſhare of it.

The apoſtle, very ſenſible of this, ſhews, that independent of all authority, he has a claim upon that familiar and natural ſource of juſtice, which is diſtinguiſhed by the name of common honeſty, and which would operate in the caſe, were the value of ſpiritual and carnal things only equal. But he, at the ſame time, intimates, that there is an inequality, and that the balance is confeſſedly in favor of ſpiritual things.

Upon this he grounds an appeal to the higheſt principle of human action, to which our Creator intended, that both reaſon and paſſions ſhould be ſubordinate. CONSCIENCE,

SCIENCE, being clear in the value of ſpiritual things, will not deny the equity of the demand, and gratitude, a more warm and lively principle of juſtice, will render us active in making the return.

If, in the judgment of any chriſtian, the return here claimed does not amount to an equivalent, then the legal maintenance of the miniſtry of the goſpel ſtands juſtified, without the aid of authorities and precedents from the law of Moſes; and the chriſtian, ſo far from murmuring at it, muſt be influenced, by his conſcience, to contribute towards the ſupply of whatever is defective in that maintenance.

The compariſon of ſpiritual and temporal bleſſings, is of great moment in every religious conſideration. We cannot lift up our hearts to GOD, till we raiſe them above the world, and they will not riſe higher than the world, whilſt a falſe eſtimate of carnal things poſſeſſes the mind.

Hence the teachers of a religion, which was chiefly intended to preſs mankind to "draw nigh to GOD, that "he may draw nigh to them," have, from the times of the apoſtles, ſo much inſiſted upon the different value of ſpiritual and carnal objects, that the compariſon, by frequent repetition, may have loſt ſome of its force. But it comes with a peculiar weight, in the words of my text, where a truth, very formidable to the whole ſyſtem of human prejudices, is only applied to a mere point of

equity, between the poſſeſſors of carnal, and the diſpenſers of ſpiritual things.

I need not explane the words. The ſpiritual things ſown by the miniſters of the goſpel, are well known to be thoſe means of grace, which they are impowered to offer, and bound in conſcience to recommend to the world; thoſe means which GOD hath appointed for obtaining his favor here and hereafter.

The favor of GOD is at leaſt as deſirable to him, who looks farther than this world, as the favor of his prince is to him who looks no farther. It is not the leſs ſo, for being a happineſs above our conception; for when the ſcripture invites us to ſeek it by metaphors and allegories, drawn from worldy happineſs, thoſe figures which can give us only an inadequate idea of it, are explained by intimations, that the joys of heaven are perfect joys, and the pleaſures of heaven perpetual pleaſures.

The light of GOD's countenance is deſcribed as a ſhining light, communicating, as the ſun doth to the material world, light and warmth to the ſoul. This is the happineſs which chriſtians aſpire after, the harveſt for which ſpiritual things are ſown.

There is hardly an inſtance in which oppoſites illuſtrate each other more ſtrongly than this. Worldly happineſs, as oppoſed to celeſtial joys, is uſually comprehended under the word proſperity, a term which conveys a complex idea

idea of the poſſeſſion of all that appetites and paſſions prompt the beſt of us to wiſh, health, wealth, and contentment.

Health is precarious by nature. Wealth is expoſed to ſo many uncertainties, that it is called by the name of fortune, a capricious imaginary being. And perfect contentment, however men may preſcribe it, or boaſt of it, is hardly ever the reſult merely of health and wealth.

But though theſe are jointly requiſite to complete worldly happineſs, one of them is more aſſiduouſly purſued than the reſt, as it is obſerved, in ſome inſtances, to be the means of health, and ſeems, in general, to be a very reaſonable foundation for contentment. Beſides, the ſplendor of it, being more diffuſive, than that of a private enjoyment, or a private virtue, is more apt to dazzle the eyes of the generality of mankind.

Now, in order to extract happineſs from wealth, it is neceſſary, not only to be judicious in the uſe, but to preſerve a conſtant ſenſibility, and a perpetual poſſeſſion of it. The firſt of theſe depends upon the character of the poſſeſſor; that the ſecond is impoſſible, we may appeal to all that proſper in the world; and that the third is ſo, it would be ſuperfluous to affirm. The happineſs, therefore, which is brought in compariſon with that which we are taught by religion to purſue, is imperfect and tranſitory.

The means to it would of courſe be inferior to ſpiritual things, even if they did lead infallibly to that imperfect, precarious degree of happineſs, which they are ſaid to procure. But here, again, lies an appeal to thoſe who have experienced, what it is to have riches in poſſeſſion. Moſt of them will confeſs, if they ſpeak what they feel, that riches are ſo far vanity, at leaſt, that they do not anſwer the end they promiſe; they are not, in themſelves, ſufficient means of happineſs.

This being the ſtate then of ſpiritual and carnal things, let every man of conſcience judge, is it a great matter, if the perſons who ſow the former, deſire to reap from thoſe, for whoſe ſake they are ſown, a competent ſhare of the latter, eſpecially as their attention to the one incapacitates them from acquiring the other.

We ſee, from the different value of ſpiritual and carnal things, that the compenſation, which is far leſs than an equivalent, is a juſt and equitable claim. The legiſlators of all countries, where chriſtianity has been received, have born teſtimony to this truth; and though the proviſion they made for the eſtabliſhed clergy might, under a change of times and cuſtoms, become defective, it ſufficiently evidences their intention, to exempt the teachers of chriſtianity, in ſome meaſure, from the cares of the world. So that, wherever there is a real defect, there the appeal to the conſciences of chriſtians continues in full force.

That

That the maintenance of many of the clergy of our national church is incompetent, has been publicly proclamed by a royal bounty, which was projected ſoon after the revolution, granted in the next reign, and has been ſecured ever ſince, under two illuſtrious protectors of our religion and liberties.

But it is well known, that this bounty, great as it is, has been neceſſarily ſlow in its operation, from the prodigious multitude of its objects. It can extend no farther, than a bare competency, to thoſe whoſe lot it is to enjoy it; and it cannot extend to all, who truly need it, till a very remote period of time.

In the mean while, the nature of the miniſterial office pleads in their behalf with Chriſtians. Indeed it pleads their cauſe with All men, for All muſt obſerve their general incapacity for acquiring a ſubſiſtance, but from their office. And if, notwitſtanding the ſeveral diſcouragements poor clergymen labor under, moſt of them are obſerved to perſevere, with cheerfulneſs and aſſiduity, in their calling, and many of them to ſtruggle with the difficulties attending a numerous family, without one public application to the charity of the chriſtian world, ſurely it is no great thing if we are liberal, on this occaſion, to the deſcendants of perſons, whoſe poverty aroſe chiefly, from the nature of their profeſſion, from their zeal in diſcharging the duties of it, and from the inſufficiency of their legal reward.

The nature of the miniſterial office requires, that the perſons, who undertake it, ſhould be ſet apart for that office. This would be matter of decency, if their duty conſiſted only in obſerving the public preſcribed forms of religion. But there are many private duties, incumbent upon a conſcientious teacher, which cannot be faithfully diſcharged, when the mind is engroſſed by other cares.

To defend the truths of religion, againſt thoſe who diſbelieve, and thoſe who corrupt them, demands more learning, and more temper, than are uſually acquired in the diſſipations of a buſy life. Yet this is a qualification which is only occaſionally requiſite. There is another more important, and almoſt a ſcience of itſelf.

To exhort, to rebuke, and to comfort, with judgment, and weight, and in due proportion, " without preferring " one before another, doing nothing by partiality," is a work of ſo much thought, experience and diſintereſtedneſs, that we can hardly conceive a mind, embarraſſed, in a great degree, with worldly cares, to be ſufficiently qualified for it.

To inculcate the virtues they teach, by their own example, requires great nicety of conduct. Other good men may keep their characters unblemiſhed by mere habits of virtue, without any extraordinary attention to themſelves, becauſe the world is leſs curious in prying into their foibles. But a teacher of chriſtianity is ſo expoſed

poſed to the diſcernment of the beſt, and the obloquy of the worſt of his hearers, that he cannot, with ſafety to his character, and therefore with ſucceſs to his miniſtry, engage himſelf too deeply, in matters foreign to his profeſſion.

Thus the nature of the miniſterial office requires, that thoſe who are dedicated to it, ſhould " meditate upon " theſe things, and give themſelves wholly to them; " that they ſhould take heed unto themſelves, and unto " their doctrine, and continue in them;" for it is only by doing this, that they can hope to ſave themſelves and their hearers.

Accordingly their education is adapted to the nature of their office. It is generally obſerved, that thoſe who are moſt diligent in the courſe of their ſtudies, come into the world with a diſpoſition of mind admirably turned for the miniſtry, but that of all men in health, they are moſt unfit to eat the bread of carefulneſs.

In the courſe of their education, the kindneſs of their friends, or the piety of founders and benefactors, had provided their ſuſtenance, with very little thought or care on their part; and the ingenuous manner of converſing, which is acquired in the courſe of a liberal education, expoſes them, in many inſtances, to the crafts of little minds, who, for the ſake of filthy lucre, are tempted to avail themſelves of the ſimplicity and inexperience of their paſtors.

Beſides this inattention to minute points of intereſt, they unavoidably become acquainted with conveniences, unſuitable to their future condition; and, by habit, conveniences inſenſibly change their nature, and become neceſſaries. The moſt ſtudious, who are leaſt delicate in other reſpects, may acquire a taſte for luxuries in literature, which only deſerve to be ſo called, from the proportion they bear to their ſcanty revenue.

Now, let us ſuppoſe a perſon, thus educated and qualified for his office, with a temper above the little practices of avarice or penury, with an underſtanding equal to a more lucrative profeſſion, confined to this, to which he hath ſolemnly devoted himſelf, and we ſhall admit, that nothing but religious conſiderations can reconcile him to the diſtreſs of an incompetent maintenance.

But, at the ſame time, his zeal for the ſucceſs of his miniſtry, muſt heighten his diſtreſs. Of all the duties of religion, charity, expreſſed by almſgiving, is the moſt engaging, and that in which, for the ſake of his office, he would wiſh to be exemplary. The poor are apt to lay open their wants to the perſon, whom they apprehend beſt diſpoſed to relieve them, and whoſe ſpiritual relation to his flock juſtly intitles them to his compaſſion. In ſuch a caſe, he is frequently reduced to a ſelf-denial, extremely mortifying in itſelf, but imbittered by this circumſtance, that many ſuch arguments of his poverty will be miſtaken for arguments of uncharitableneſs.

Theſe

Theſe are his diſtreſſes, even in a ſtate of celibacy; and they furniſh the church of Rome with a pretence for impoſing that ſtate, contrary to the deſign of nature, without the leaſt authority from ſcripture, and therefore, without any power, inherent in the church, to enact ſuch a law.

The moral conſequences of it were too groſs to have been ever intended, in the darkeſt and moſt corrupt ages of the church; nor need we impute them to the projectors and ſupporters of that law. Another miſchievous effect, expoſes the deſign of it more glaringly. The uſurpations of the papacy were greatly promoted, by this total detachment of the clergy from civil ſociety.

Accordingly, this was one of the firſt objects, that engaged the attention of the reformers. They immediately reſtored the clergy to the common right of human nature, and ſo united their intereſts with thoſe of the ſociety, of which they are members.

But, though the reformation would have been very imperfect, without abrogating that unnatural law, the bulk of the clergy were left ill qualified for enjoying the ſocial bleſſings, to which they were reſtored; a grievance the more ſenſibly felt by them, as new obligations were introduced, by the very rights they recovered. They were now expected to become examples to their flock,

in the moſt important of all human relations, the political, the conjugal, and the parental character.

But if the difficulties, with which an indigent clergyman is embarraſſed, were barely tolerable, in a ſtate of celibacy, how ſhall he become exemplary in diſcharging the more expenſive duties of domeſtic life? For the change of his condition is but ſeldom attended with a proportionable change in his circumſtances.

Self-denial was ſo much his duty, and, by neceſſity, become ſo habitual to him, during his celibacy, that his own wants were leſs preſſing, in proportion as his mind was formed for inattention to them. But he has now communicated a part of his ſorrows to one, whom he would wiſh to ſee the partaker only of joys and comforts. Many conveniencies, which he denied to himſelf, he cannot withhold from her. Perhaps, from a little human infirmity, he may wiſh her to appear in a manner, more conſiſtent with his character, than with his revenue. Perhaps the world may expect more of this kind from him, than even his tenderneſs for her, ſtraitened as it is by his circumſtances, could incline to.

In the midſt of all this concern for her decent ſupport, conſider how bitterly the proſpect of his own death muſt affect him! "The remembrance of death is bitter to "the man who liveth at reſt in his poſſeſſions." It is grievous to him to quit a world, "in which he has but "little to vex him, and proſperity in all things." The oppoſite

oppoſite condition ſhould ſeem to render death deſirable. And ſo it would, were not the diſtreſſes, he labors under, tranſmitted, with great aggravation, to one, for whom he is more ſollicitous, than for himſelf. After all his ſtruggles with the difficulties attending a narrow ſupport, he is to leave her deſtitute of Any, and has only the ſmall comfort of hoping, that ſhe may be recommended to ſome ſhare, in a charity, diſtinct from that now before us, eſtabliſhed merely for the relief of the unhappy widows of poor clergymen.

But the ſcene, which this painful ſeparation exhibits to our minds, becomes much more affecting, if we conſider them ſurrounded with a numerous offspring, and diſtracted by anxious cares for their education and future ſubſiſtence.

The natural tenderneſs of a parent is known to operate too ſtrongly in the education of his child. It degenerates into an infirmity, of which a benevolent mind would rather compaſſionate the effect, than cenſure the cauſe.

But here is a parent, who was rendered unhappy by every laudable emotion of tenderneſs for his child. His parochial and domeſtic cares limited his temporal views, and his regard to his duty, confined, perhaps, very great talents, to his own profeſſion. He was forming many pleaſing ſchemes for educating his children, in order to raiſe them above the wants, by which himſelf was depreſſed, but was called, prematurely, from the en-

joyment of thoſe wiſhes, and interrupted, in the hopes of happineſs of a ſuperior kind for himſelf, by the apprehenſion of miſery to his family.

He muſt have had too much experience of the world, to flatter himſelf, that his orphans would be treated with the partiality, of which they were ſecure in his breaſt. It would have been ſome conſolation, as he muſt deſpair of much indulgence to them, to be aſſured, that the charity, which they are reduced to ſeek, will be obtained, and prudently applied. But as it is conſidered as mere charity, it was to him but a precarious dependence, whilſt he ſaw the religion, which inſpires it, not duly attended to.

Theſe are very melancholy reflexions in his laſt hours; and though his mind ſhould be principally elſewhere engaged, yet it is rather to be wiſhed, than always experienced, that religious conſiderations may have the greateſt weight, at a time, when human nature is moſt diſtreſſed.

Permit me therefore, to put the benefactions of this day upon a plea leſs evaſible, than that of mere charity, by repeating the apoſtle's queſtion, "If we have ſown "unto you ſpiritual things, is it a great thing, if we "ſhall reap your carnal things?"

He ſtates the queſtion, as if the People, to whom he wrote, thought it an unreaſonable claim. It cannot be conſidered

conſidered as ſuch, in the caſe before us, unleſs ſome other proviſion could be ſuggeſted, to prevent the deſtitute ſituation of theſe children.

We are told indeed, of levelling ſchemes, abſurd in ſpeculation, and to all appearance impracticable; not to mention, that if they could take place, they would prove inſufficient for the end.

In the ſight of God, all orders and degrees of men are equal, except only the diſtinction of their religious and moral characters. But as men cannot perfectly diſtinguiſh theſe, the courſe of the world muſt depend upon other conſiderations. And as the caſe of accumulating riches, from the ſuperior offices in the church, is too rare, to found a general complaint, ſo there are very few inſtances, in compariſon, of perſons poſſeſſed of thoſe offices, who have been inattentive to the wants of their inferior brethren, and have, by their own conduct, weakened the force of this appeal to the conſciences of mankind in general.

I ſay, of Mankind in general; for the fathers of theſe orphans were employed in an office of the higheſt utility to the public, as preachers of righteouſneſs, which exalteth a nation. The ſpiritual things, which they have ſown, amidſt all the corruptions of the world, have contributed to preſerve peace, and order, and juſtice amongſt men. So far their children, impoveriſhed by

the profeſſion of their parent, deſerve the attention of every man of public ſpirit.

But let chriſtians as ſuch, conſider the uſe of the miniſterial office to Themſelves, how much they ſtand in need of the admonitions, and the comforts, they receive from it, in order to their perſeverance in the duties, and their attainment of the hopes of their religion. The CHRISTIAN, who conſiders this, cannot want motives, either of charity or juſtice, to contribute to the preſent collection; nor can he be earneſtly intent upon the proſpects chriſtianity opens to him, if he ſuffer thoſe motives to be overpowered, by the narrow fear of alienating any part of his property.

It is not alienated from the public, for every virtuous child, provided for upon the plan of this charity, is an acceſſion of wealth to the community; and the ſucceſſors of their parents will be animated to bear the diſcouragements of their office, by the comfortable hopes they derive from this ſolemnity, that when themſelves are provided in another ſtate, their children will not be left totally deſtitute in this.

Nor do the contributions of this day, alienate the property of the contributor from himſelf, at leaſt no more, than the purchaſe of any other inſtance of happineſs.

That

That "the merciful man doth good to his own "ſoul," is a truth founded in experience, as well as authority. None but a very malignant mind can be inſenſible of the pleaſure of doing juſtice, or of communicating happineſs.

The glory of God conſiſts chiefly in this, the life and character of our Saviour, Himſelf and his doctrine, had no other tendency; and an apoſtle, who throughout his epiſtle, carefully diſtinguiſhes real religion from nominal, having placed much of the purity of religion in viſiting the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, does by implication plead powerfully, in behalf of theſe fatherleſs and widows in particular, as they ſtand more intimately related to chriſtians, as they derive their poverty from the eſtabliſhment, and found their hopes of relief, in the ſpirit of chriſtianity.

A LIST *of the Annual Account of this Charity, as compleat as could be procured, commencing with* 1721. *Shewing how much, in general, the Charity has increaſed by the Approbation and Bounty of the Public, which, it is hoped, will be continued, that the Sums collected may equal the Wants of the diſtreſſed Objects.*

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
1721—	330	16	
1722—	328	16	
1723—	382	6	
1724—	566	10	
1725—	630	5	
1726—	575	4	
1727—	651		
1728—	595	17	9
1729—	523	6	11
1730—	722	6	4
1731—	840	1	
1732—	951	1	3
1733—	909	6	
1734—	1000	3	
1735—	850	5	3
1736—	837	7	
1737—	856	9	7
1738—	935	2	7
1739—	912	11	3
1740—	784	1	6
1741—	834	2	
1742—	866	6	2
1743—	819		
1744—	848	16	9
1745—	1044		
1746—	922	10	6
1747—	1062	2	
1748—	916	6	6
1749—	985	12	6
1750—	1134	14	
1751—	1167	19	
1752—	1101	18	6
1753—	1063	2	6
1754—	976	8	2

A LIST of the Annual Account of this Charity, as com-
plete as could be procured, commencing with 1721.
Shewing how much, in general, the Charity has increased
by the Approbation and Bounty of the Public, which
it is hoped will be continued, that the Sums collected
may equal the Wants of the diffreſſed Objects.

	£.	s.	d.
1721—	330	16	
1722—	328	16	
1723—	382	6	
1724—	566	10	
1725—	630	2	
1726—	512	4	
1727—	651		
1728—	595	17	9
1729—	523	6	11
1730—	722	6	4
1731—	840	1	
1732—	951	1	3
1733—	909	6	
1734—	1000	8	
1735—	850	2	3
1736—	837	7	
1737—	856	9	4

	£.	s.	d.
1738—	935	2	7
1739—	912	11	3
1740—	784	1	6
1741—	634	2	
1742—	866	6	2
1743—	810		
1744—	848	16	9
1745—	1014		
1746—	922	10	6
1747—	1062	2	
1748—	910	6	6
1749—	958	12	6
1750—	1134	14	
1751—	1107	19	
1752—	1101	18	6
1753—	1063	2	6
1754—	970	8	2